



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/608,962	06/27/2003	Michael J. Critelli	F-651	7396
919	7590	07/05/2007		
PITNEY BOWES INC. 35 WATERVIEW DRIVE P.O. BOX 3000 MSC 26-22 SHELTON, CT 06484-8000			EXAMINER POPOVICI, DOV	
			ART UNIT 2625	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 07/05/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/608,962

Applicant(s)

CRITELLI ET AL.

Examiner

Dov Popovici

Art Unit

2625

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 June 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-76 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27, 55-60 and 66-76 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 28-52, 54 and 61-65 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 53 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 27 June 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

*Dov Popovici*

**DOV POPOVICI**  
**PRIMARY EXAMINER**

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 6/27/2003 and 7/24/2006.

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 28, 40, 48 and 61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ediger et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0032190 A1).

As to claim 28, Ediger et al. discloses a method for processing a mail item comprising: receiving a request for tracking identification information from a sender for the mail item; generating the tracking identification information, the tracking identification information including at least one of an identifier associated with the sender (see page 1, paragraph 0004, and page 2, paragraphs 0015 and 0018), the tracking identification information further including a unique identification number; and returning the tracking identification information to the sender for affixing to the mail item (see figure 2).

As to claim 40, Ediger et al. discloses wherein generating the tracking identification information further comprises: encrypting the tracking identification information (see figure 3, and page 2, paragraph 0018).

As to claim 48, Ediger et al. discloses further comprising: printing the tracking identification information on the mail item.

Art Unit: 2625

As to claim 61, Ediger et al. discloses a mail item comprising: encrypted tracking identification information, the tracking identification information including at least one of an identifier associated with a sender of the mail item (see page 2, paragraph 0018), the tracking identification information further including a unique identification number; and a recipient address, wherein the tracking identification information can be utilized to determine the sender of the mail item (see page 2, paragraph 0018 and figures 2 and 3).

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Sansone (U.S. 6,574,000).

The applied reference has a common Assignee with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not the invention "by another," or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

As to claim 28, Sansone (U.S. 6,574,000) discloses a method for processing a mail item comprising: receiving a request for tracking identification information from a sender for the mail item; generating the tracking identification information, the tracking identification information including at least one of an identification associated with equipment from which the request is made (see column 3, lines 50-62 and column 4, lines 5-32), the tracking identification information further including a unique identification number (see figure 2, code 22); and returning the tracking identification information to the sender for affixing to the mail item.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 29-39, 41-47, 49-52, 54 and 62-65 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ediger et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0032190 A1).

As to claims 29-39, Ediger et al. does not disclose receiving authentication information from the user, determining if the authentication information is valid, and if the authentication information is valid, generating the tracking identification information, wherein the authentication information includes at least one of a user name and password, wherein the authentication information includes at least one of an employee

identification number and password, wherein the authentication information includes biometric information, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes a least a portion of the authentication information, retrieving the identifier associated with the sender based on the authentication information, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes an employee identification number, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes a user name, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes biometric information, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes at least a portion of a credit card number, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes at least a portion of a driver's license number.

The examiner is taking "Official Notice" that receiving authentication information from the user, determining if the authentication information is valid, and if the authentication information is valid, generating the tracking identification information, wherein the authentication information includes at least one of a user name and password, wherein the authentication information includes at least one of an employee identification number and password, wherein the authentication information includes biometric information, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes a least a portion of the authentication information, retrieving the identifier associated with the sender based on the authentication information, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes an employee identification number, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes a user name, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes biometric information, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes at least a portion of a credit card number, wherein the identifier

Art Unit: 2625

associated with the sender includes at least a portion of a driver's license number, are all well known in the computer, network and printing art technology.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Ediger et al. wherein the system includes receiving authentication information from the user, determining if the authentication information is valid, and if the authentication information is valid, generating the tracking identification information, wherein the authentication information includes at least one of a user name and password, wherein the authentication information includes at least one of an employee identification number and password, wherein the authentication information includes biometric information, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes at least a portion of the authentication information, retrieving the identifier associated with the sender based on the authentication information, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes an employee identification number, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes a user name, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes biometric information, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes at least a portion of a credit card number, wherein the identifier associated with the sender includes at least a portion of a driver's license number.

It would have been obvious to one person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Ediger et al. so that his system can be user protected, to prevent others unauthorized individuals from using the machine.

As to claims 41-47 and 49-52 and 54, Ediger et al. does not disclose wherein generating the tracking identification information further comprises: digitally signing the tracking identification information, wherein the request is received from a remote workstation, wherein the tracking identification information is generated within a workstation being used by the sender, storing information related to the request for tracking identification information, wherein the information related to the request includes a date and time of the request, wherein the information related to the request includes an identification of a workstation from which the request was made, wherein the information related to the request includes an identification of a printer on which at least a portion of the mail item was printed, printing the tracking identification information on a label for affixing to the mail item, wherein the request for tracking identification information includes a code that describes the mail item contents, wherein generating the tracking identification information further comprises: generating a postage indicium for the mail item, at least a portion of the postage indicium being used as the unique identification number, encoding the identifier associated with the sender into the postage indicium, wherein the tracking identification information further includes an indication of special services requested for the mail item.

The examiner is taking "Official Notice" that wherein generating the tracking identification information further comprises: digitally signing the tracking identification information, wherein the request is received from a remote workstation, wherein the tracking identification information is generated within a workstation being used by the sender, storing information related to the request for tracking identification information,



Art Unit: 2625

wherein the information related to the request includes a date and time of the request, wherein the information related to the request includes an identification of a workstation from which the request was made, wherein the information related to the request includes an identification of a printer on which at least a portion of the mail item was printed, printing the tracking identification information on a label for affixing to the mail item, wherein the request for tracking identification information includes a code that describes the mail item contents, wherein generating the tracking identification information further comprises: generating a postage indicium for the mail item, at least a portion of the postage indicium being used as the unique identification number, encoding the identifier associated with the sender into the postage indicium, wherein the tracking identification information further includes an indication of special services requested for the mail item, are all well known features in the computer, network and printing art technology.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Ediger et al. wherein generating the tracking identification information further comprises: digitally signing the tracking identification information, wherein the request is received from a remote workstation, wherein the tracking identification information is generated within a workstation being used by the sender, storing information related to the request for tracking identification information, wherein the information related to the request includes a date and time of the request, wherein the information related to the request includes an identification of a workstation from which the request was made, wherein the information related to the

Art Unit: 2625

request includes an identification of a printer on which at least a portion of the mail item was printed, printing the tracking identification information on a label for affixing to the mail item, wherein the request for tracking identification information includes a code that describes the mail item contents, wherein generating the tracking identification information further comprises: generating a postage indicium for the mail item, at least a portion of the postage indicium being used as the unique identification number, encoding the identifier associated with the sender into the postage indicium, wherein the tracking identification information further includes an indication of special services requested for the mail item.

It would have been obvious to one person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Ediger et al. so that the identification information can be digitally signed as an enhanced added security feature, so that a request can be issued by a user within a network from a remote workstation, so that the request include specific information as to date and time, id of workstation, id of printer, printing the tracking id on a label for affixing to mail, generating postage indicium, and encode the identifier, and finally adding special services requested for the mail, are all add features which would enhance and provide for a faster and more secure tracking and delivery of mailed items.

As to claims 62-65, applicant is directed to the remarks made above in claims 41, 51 and 54.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 1-27, 55-60 and 66-76 are allowed.

Claim 53 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Ediger et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0032190 A1) discloses an identification mark is configured such that any desired information can be stored on it. It is possible for the storage to be performed by the user by a suitable writing device. For example, in particular various franking data such as the franking value, the sender, or a corresponding identification of the sender (see page 2, paragraph 0018). Furthermore, Ediger et al. discloses storing personal information about the user of the franking machines (see page 1, paragraph 0004).

Sansone (U.S. 6,574,000) discloses that the postal indicia (11) contains the place the mail was mailed from, and the postal meter serial number (see column 3, lines 50-62 and column 4, lines 5-32).

However, the closest prior art of record, namely, Ediger et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0032190 A1) and Sansone (U.S. 6,574,000), still do not disclose, teach or suggest, if the mail item is provided with tracking identification

information, associating the tracking identification information with a unique aspect of the mail item and generating a record of the association between the tracking identification information and the unique aspect of the mail item (in combination with determining if the mail item is provided with tracking identification information including at least one of an identifier associated with a sender of the mail item and an identifier associated with equipment used to generate the mail item, the tracking identification information further including a unique identification number), as claimed in independent claim 1.

Claims 2-27 are dependent from independent claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons as discussed above with respect to independent claim 1.

Ediger et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0032190 A1) discloses an identification mark is configured such that any desired information can be stored on it. It is possible for the storage to be performed by the user by a suitable writing device. For example, in particular various franking data such as the franking value, the sender, or a corresponding identification of the sender, and the addressee may be contained in encrypted or unencrypted form (see page 2, paragraph 0018). Furthermore, Ediger et al. discloses storing personal information about the user of the franking machines (see page 1, paragraph 0004).

However, the closest prior art of record, namely, Ediger et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0032190 A1) and Sansone (U.S. 6,574,000), still do not disclose, teach or suggest, generating a record associating the unique identifier with an

identification associated with the sender and storing the record in a database, (in combination with the other claimed features/steps of receiving, generating, encrypting and returning steps found in independent claim 55), as claimed in independent claim 55.

Claims 56-59 are dependent from independent claim 55 and are allowable for the same reasons as discussed above with respect to independent claim 55.

The closest prior art of record, namely, Ediger et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0032190 A1) and Sansone (U.S. 6,574,000), still do not disclose, teach or suggest, the tracking identification information further including a unique identification number and a digital signature; verifying the digital signature; if the digital signature is verified, associating the tracking identification information with a unique aspect of the mail item; generating a record of the association between the tracking identification information and the unique aspect of the mail item; and storing the record, (in combination with the other claimed features found in independent claim 60), as claimed in independent claim 60.

The closest prior art of record, namely, Ediger et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0032190 A1) and Sansone (U.S. 6,574,000), still do not disclose, teach or suggest, the server including a sequence number generator; a plurality of workstations coupled to the server, each of the plurality of workstations being operable by a sender of a mail item to request tracking identification information from the server, the tracking identification information further including a unique identification number

Art Unit: 2625

generated by the sequence number generator; the tracking identification information affixed to the mail item is associated with a unique aspect of the mail item and a record of the association between the tracking identification information and the unique aspect of the mail item is stored in a database associated with the mailing machine, thereby allowing the sender of the mail item to be identified (in combination with the other claimed features found in independent claim 66), as claimed in independent claim 66.

Claims 67-76 are dependent from independent claim 66 and are allowable for the same reasons as discussed above with respect to independent claim 66.

The closest prior art of record, namely, Ediger et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0032190 A1) and Sansone (U.S. 6,574,000), still do not disclose, teach or suggest, generating a record associating the identification associated with the sender and the postage indicium; and storing the record (in combination with the other claimed features found in claim 51 and 28), as claimed in claim 53.

### ***Conclusion***

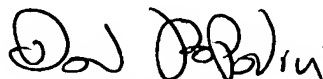
The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Sugano Wataru et al. (JP 2005128710 A) teaches customer identification information printed on the mail (see abstract).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dov Popovici whose telephone number is 571-272-4083. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward Coles can be reached on 571-272-7402. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Dov Popovici  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2625

DOV POPOVICI  
PRIMARY EXAMINER